

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN APEC MEETINGS IN THE UNITED STATES

### **1. Do I need a visa to travel to an APEC meeting in the United States? Who is responsible for helping me with the visa process?**

Individual travelers must determine whether they require visas to enter the United States. Information on visa requirements is available on the Department of State's travel information website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). Before departing for the United States, individual travelers must check whether they need to obtain a visa for the United States or for any transit point along the way. If a U.S. visa is required, the traveler should allow sufficient time before the planned departure date to apply for and obtain a visa. Direct inquiries to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate; for a list of U.S. embassies and consulates, see <http://www.usembassy.gov>.

### **2. Will the event organizers or APEC Secretariat help me obtain my visa?**

No, the individual traveler is responsible for his or her visa application.

### **3. Can visas be procured in a short time?**

Visa processing times vary significantly from one location to another. Applicants should apply for visas as early as possible. APEC attendees should check the website of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate now for information on visa interview appointment wait times and processing requirements. Links to the website of U.S. embassies and consulates can be found at <http://www.usembassy.gov>.

### **4. Do I need a visa if I have an APEC Business Travel Card?**

Possession of an APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) does not affect visa requirements, your visa status, the visa process, or your eligibility for a U.S. visa.

### **5. I come from a Visa Waiver Program country/economy. Do I need a visa?**

If you represent the private sector, you may travel to the APEC meetings on the Visa Waiver Program. However, if you are traveling in an official capacity, if you are a diplomat, or if you are going to cover the meetings for media, you will need the correct visa even if you are from a VWP country.

### **6. What kind of visa do I need?**

APEC participants attending on behalf of a foreign government and members of the news media must have visas in the appropriate classification. Heads of state, heads of government, and those in Cabinet-level positions require A-1 visas. Other representatives of APEC member economies require A-2 visas if the economy is a foreign government recognized de jure by the United States.

Please note that individuals who are seconded to the APEC Secretariat by a foreign government, and will not be performing official duties in the United States on behalf of that foreign government, would need a visa classification other than A-2. Such members of the APEC Secretariat would need B-1 visas if not from a Visa Waiver Program (VWP) country or Canada.

Others attending APEC may travel on a B-1 visa or under the VWP if from a VWP country. Please note that Canadian participants do not need visas. Applications should be made as early as possible. Accredited news media representatives reporting on APEC events would need I visas.

The U.S. Government will sponsor the travel of some attendees on exchange visitor (J-1) visas. In those instances, the sponsoring organization will provide more information.

## **7. How do I qualify for the APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC)?**

To qualify for the ABTC, business travelers must demonstrate they: hold a passport from a participating economy (or are a Hong Kong permanent resident with any valid travel document); travel regularly to conduct trade and investment activities in the APEC region; and, have not been convicted of a criminal offense. Each economy vets its ABTC applicants for eligibility and criminal history before the applications are submitted to other economies for their own vetting. Each economy reserves the right to accept or reject any ABTC applicant and institute its own processing procedures. An economy is not obligated to provide reasons for application rejection. For more information about the ABTC, visit <http://www.businessmobility.org/key/abtc.html>.

## **8. I am a U.S. Citizen. Can I get an ABTC?**

The United States does not issue ABTCs at this time.